

Application No.: 10/675,405
Amendment Dated September 19, 2006
Reply to Office Action of May 2, 2006

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

Please replace originally filed drawing sheets 1/3, 2/3, and 3/3 with replacement sheets 1/3, 2/3, and 3/3 attached as the appendix to this paper.

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the courtesies extended to the undersigned during the telephonic interview on August 28, 2006. As discussed during the interview, Applicants request reconsideration of Claims 1-10 in view of the Amendments and Remarks set forth herein, which Applicants consider to be a summary of the matters discussed during the interview.

The Objection to the Drawings Should be Withdrawn

The Office Action objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a). As discussed during the interview, Applicants have amended Fig. 9 to show a diameter of central portion 19 that is larger than the second effective outside diameter, as recited in Claim 9. In addition, in reviewing the drawings, Applicants noted that a number of reference numerals had been inadvertently omitted. Specifically, reference number 32 was missing from FIG. 5, and reference numerals 19, D₁, D₂, and D₃ were missing from FIG. 9. Applicants have corrected these deficiencies.

As a result, Applicants respectfully submit that the objections to the drawings as outlined in the Office Action should be withdrawn.

The Objection to Claim 1 Should be Withdrawn

The Office Action objected to Claim 1 indicating that it included redundant language. In lieu of the amendment made to Claim 1 herein, Applicants respectfully submit that this objection is now moot, and thus should be withdrawn.

The Claims Have Been Clarified

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,717,067 (the '067 patent) to Vick et al. The Office Action also rejected Claims 5-7, 9 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '067 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,842,319 (the '319 patent) to Ravetto. The Office Action also rejected

Claims 5-8 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '067 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,328,823 (the '823 patent) to MacKenzie.

As discussed during the interview, independent Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the axially outward end section includes a first inside diameter, and an axially adjacent inward section includes a second inside diameter, wherein the first inside diameter and the second inside diameter are substantially the same. As also discussed during the interview, independent Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that edges of at least some of the retaining elements of the inward section are rounded. These features are important as they help to make the fastener capable of being partially inserted into a cover member to effect temporary interengagement sufficient to avoid inadvertent disengagement thereof, and of being disengaged from temporary interengagement using a gentle pulling force.

Claim 3 has been amended to cure a typographical error, and Claims 8 and 9 have been amended to be consistent with the amendment made to independent Claim 1

As agreed during the interview, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, teach or suggest a fastener having an axially outward end section that includes a first inside diameter, and an axially adjacent inward section that includes a second inside diameter, wherein the first inside diameter and the second inside diameter are substantially the same, and where the edges of at least some of the retaining elements of the inward section are rounded, as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claim 1, and the claims depending therefrom, include recitations that patentably distinguish the invention over the prior art of record, either alone or in combination.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1-10 of the present application are in condition for allowance. It is respectfully requested that a Notice of Allowance be issued in due course. Examiner Saether is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to resolve any remaining issues in order to expedite examination of the present application.

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It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,

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LEGAL02/30087890v1

ELECTRONICALLY FILED USING THE EFS-WEB ELECTRONIC FILING SYSTEM OF THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2006.